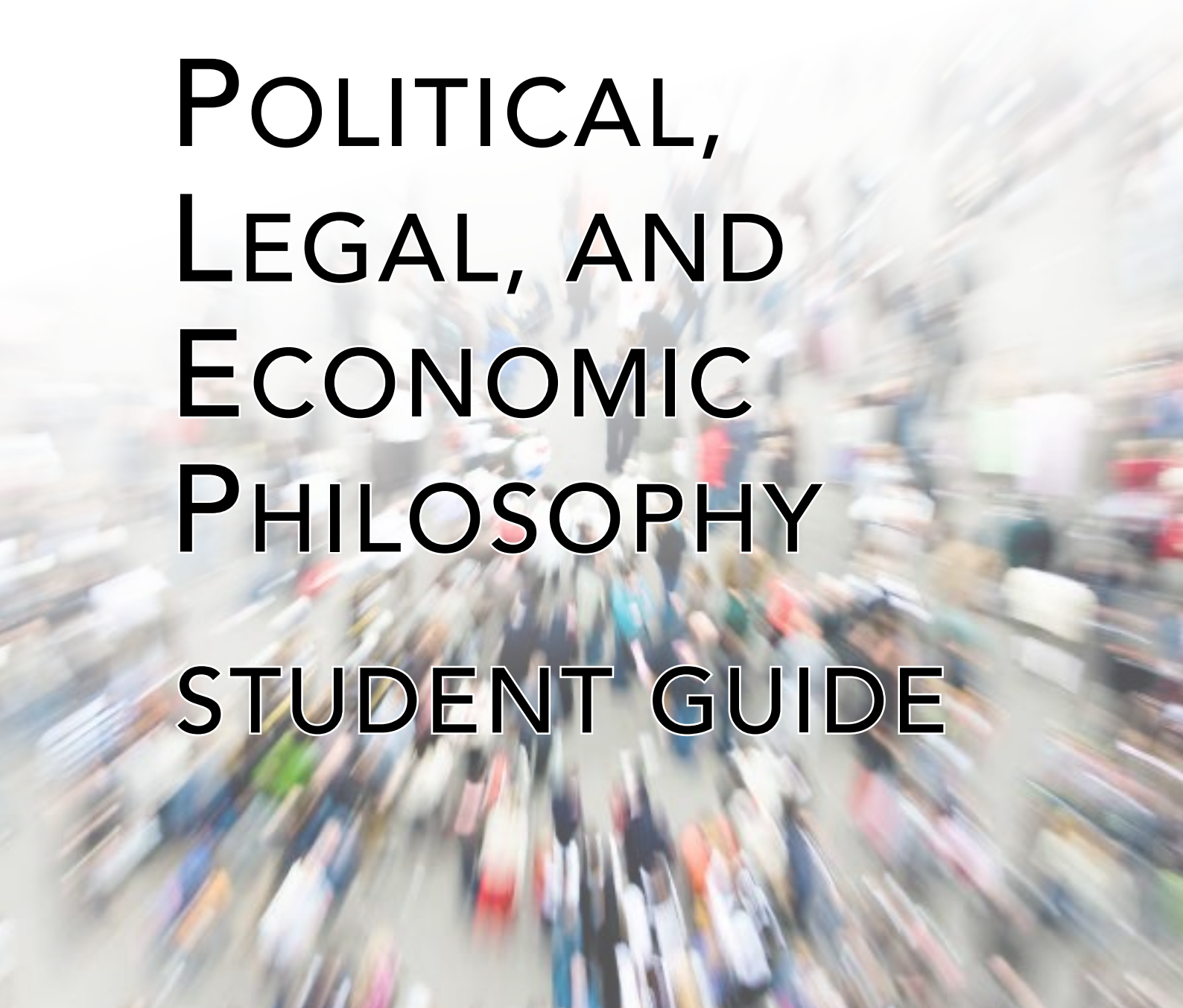


MA POLITICAL, LEGAL, AND  
ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY  
(120 ECTS)  
Institute of Philosophy  
University of Bern

Version 05/21

A blurred, high-angle photograph of a large crowd of people, likely at a university event, serving as the background for the title text.

# POLITICAL, LEGAL, AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY STUDENT GUIDE

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# Abbreviations

- ECTS** = European Credit Transfer System
- CTS/KSL** = Core Teaching System including the course catalogue  
(German: Kernsystem Lehre inklusive Vorlesungsverzeichnis)
- ILIAS** = Learning management system  
(German: Integriertes Lern-, Informations- und Arbeitskooperations-System)

# 1. Starting the PLEP program

## 1.1 "Who's Who?"

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### Lecturers in practical philosophy

Prof. Dr. Anna Goppel	Director of the PLEP Office: B201, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:anna.goppel@philo.unibe.ch">anna.goppel@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 35 96
Prof. Dr. Markus Stepanians	Director of the PLEP Office: B209, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:markus.stepanians@philo.unibe.ch">markus.stepanians@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 35 91
Prof. Dr. Andreas Müller	Assistant Professor of Practical Philosophy Office: B210, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:andreas.mueller@philo.unibe.ch">andreas.mueller@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 82 87

Alternating visiting lecturers from various Swiss and foreign universities.

### PLEP Study consultation

Marcel Twele	Office: B214, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:marcel.twele@philo.unibe.ch">marcel.twele@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 35 94
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### Secretaries of the Institute

Ursula Müllener	Office: B216, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:ursula.muellener@philo.unibe.ch">ursula.muellener@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 82 86
Sandra Ribeaud	Office: B211, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:sandra.ribeaud@philo.unibe.ch">sandra.ribeaud@philo.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 80 55

### Contact person at the Dean's Office Faculty of Humanities

Nadine Ruch	Office: B242, Unitobler Mail: <a href="mailto:nadine.ruch@histdek.unibe.ch">nadine.ruch@histdek.unibe.ch</a> Phone: +41 31 684 45 86
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## Selection of important websites:

PLEP	<a href="http://philosophie.unibe.ch/plep">philosophie.unibe.ch/plep</a>
Department of Philosophy	<a href="http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/index_eng.html">http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/index_eng.html</a>
Dean's Office Faculty of Humanities	<a href="http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/about_us/dean_s_office/index_eng.html">http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/about_us/dean_s_office/index_eng.html</a>
Admissions Office	<a href="https://www.unibe.ch/university/organization/executive_board_and_central_administration/vice_rectorate_teaching/admissions_office/index_eng.html">https://www.unibe.ch/university/organization/executive_board_and_central_administration/vice_rectorate_teaching/admissions_office/index_eng.html</a>
International Office	<a href="https://www.unibe.ch/universitaet/organisation/leitung_und_zentralbereich/vizerektorat_entwicklung/unibe_international/index_ger.html">https://www.unibe.ch/universitaet/organisation/leitung_und_zentralbereich/vizerektorat_entwicklung/unibe_international/index_ger.html</a>

## 1.2 First Steps

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Browse [http://www.unibe.ch/landing\\_pages/prospective\\_students/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/landing_pages/prospective_students/index_eng.html) to find relevant information concerning the administrative part of your studies.

- With the help of your Campus Account (Student ID + Password), set up your E-Mail-Account (...@students.unibe.ch) at: <http://mail.campus.unibe.ch>.
- Activate your ILIAS-account: Go to <http://ilias.unibe.ch> and log in with your Campus Account.
- Activate you CTS/KSL-account: Go to <http://www.ksl-vv.unibe.ch>.
- Validate your student card (Unicard) at one of the validation terminals at the university (as you will have to do at the beginning of each new semester). Find out about their locations at: [http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational\\_matters/unicard/validation\\_and\\_validity/locations\\_of\\_validation\\_terminals/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational_matters/unicard/validation_and_validity/locations_of_validation_terminals/index_eng.html)
- The University of Bern provides a free Wireless LAN on the campus. In order to get access, choose "Eduroam" in the list of available networks and enter your Campus Account details when prompted.

## 1.3 Courses

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### How do I learn about courses?

You can find the whole range of courses offered by the University of Bern in CTS/KSL (course catalogue) at: <http://www.ksl-vv.unibe.ch/KSL/veranstaltungen> >Tree search >subject.

Courses in philosophy	> "Philosophie"
Courses in law	> "Rechtswissenschaft"
Courses in economics	> "Betriebswirtschaftslehre" & "Volkswirtschaftslehre"
Courses in political sciences	> "Politikwissenschaft"

The detailed description of the individual courses in CTS/KSL informs you about the allocation to a subject, language of instruction, deadlines for enrollment, prerequisites and the room where the course is taking place etc.

## How do I enroll in a course?

In general, you don't have to enroll in a course in advance. Courses that do require advanced enrollment have this indicated in the course description in CTS/KSL (see above). You often have to enroll in advance when attending a blockseminar (compact course) in philosophy or seminars at the departments of law, economics or political science. To get more information about the prerequisites and the syllabi for these courses, it may be helpful to check the websites of the corresponding departments:

Philosophy	> <a href="http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/plep">http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/plep</a> > <a href="http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch">http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch</a>
Law	> <a href="http://www.rechtswissenschaft.unibe.ch">http://www.rechtswissenschaft.unibe.ch</a>
Economics	> <a href="http://www.vwi.unibe.ch/index_eng.html">http://www.vwi.unibe.ch/index_eng.html</a> > <a href="http://www.bwl.unibe.ch/content/index_eng.html">http://www.bwl.unibe.ch/content/index_eng.html</a>
Political Sciences	> <a href="http://www.ipw.unibe.ch/content/index_eng.html">http://www.ipw.unibe.ch/content/index_eng.html</a>

If there are no particular regulations, enrollment in the courses you choose will have to be made during the semester in CTS/KLS and/or ILIAS.

- > **Note** Make sure to check early enough the deadlines for the exams in CTS/KSL and ILIAS.
- > **Note** If you miss the deadline, it is not possible to complete the course and gain the corresponding ECTS-points. Don't hesitate to ask the lecturer or his/her assistant about CTS/KLS and ILIAS enrollment in advance.

Enrollment in a course counts as definitive and puts you under the obligation to fulfill the course requirements (e.g. taking an examination or submitting a paper). You may cancel your enrollment until the deadline.

## How do I find out about which courses to take and in what order?

The mandatory individual study consultation at the beginning of your first semester will help you to decide which courses to choose. Moreover, you can benefit from further study consultations in the following semesters.

Those of you who lack a BA-Minor in philosophy have to attend 4 introductory courses in philosophy in the first and second semester.

## A short description of the various course types

- *Seminars (7 ECTS)*: Learn about different argumentation techniques and special considerations in practical philosophy, as opposed to theoretical philosophy and other sciences.
- *Colloquia (4 ECTS)*: Learn how to 'teamwork' on a philosophical topic; learn that philosophy needs dialogue.
- *Colloquium "Methods of Practical Philosophy" (4 ECTS)*: Learn about different argumentation techniques and special considerations in practical philosophy, as opposed to theoretical philosophy and other sciences.
- *Colloquium "Master's Thesis" (4 ECTS)*: Present central ideas of your master's thesis and discuss them critically.
- *Project (6 ECTS)*: Learn how to take a stand on a specific topic and to put it in writing.

- *Tutorials (6 ECTS)*: Tutor a course accompanying a seminar on bachelor level.  
> **Note** Only advanced students who have prior knowledge in philosophy (BA major in philosophy), may offer a tutorial.
- *Compact course/Blockseminar (4 ECTS)*: (mostly taught by international renowned scholars in their respective fields): Learn how to become acquainted with a philosophical topic and discuss it in a more concentrated and uninterrupted way.
- *Summer Schools (4 or 7 ECTS)*: Earn credits studying a subject intensively while engaging with students and professors from universities abroad! Participation is typically limited so keep on the lookout for registration periods.
- *Group Projects (4 ECTS)*: Under the supervision of a lecturer of their own choice, 3-5 MA students work together on one topic. The results of their research may be presented in a number of ways, for example, in a small workshop, open to other students by request.
- *Free choice of courses in philosophy with the total amount of 21 ECTS (offered by the Department of Philosophy)*: Free choice of courses which allows students to follow their own interests and to deepen their methodological skills.
- *Master's Thesis (30 ECTS)*: During the last term students are required to write (and finish) their master's thesis (25'000 words; approx. 60-70 pages).
- *Courses in political science/law/economics with the total amount of 30 ECTS (offered by the corresponding departments)*: Acquire further (empirical and methodological) knowledge in disciplines relevant to practical philosophy; learn to what extent practical philosophy may rely on other disciplines.

### Can I enroll in any course I like?

In philosophy, you can choose amongst all courses on the master's level offered by the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities (Phil.-hist.Fakultät). The choice is neither limited to courses in practical philosophy nor to courses that are marked as PLEP-courses or to courses taught in English.

In political science, economics, or law, you have the full choice of courses, as long as they are on the master's level. Pay attention to any prerequisites for particular courses in the detailed course description in CTS/KSL. But please bear in mind that you may not attend any course twice, even if there are changes in the course's outline, material, or lecturer.

### How many ECTS-points do I need?

The following types and numbers of courses are mandatory in order to gain the 120 ECTS points necessary for attaining the PLEP Master's degree:

Minimum 3 Seminars	3x7 = 21 ECTS
1 Colloquium "Master's Thesis"	1x4 = 4 ECTS
1 Colloquium "Methods of Practical Philosophy"	1x4 = 4 ECTS
Minimum 1 Compact Course	1x4 = 4 ECTS
Minimum 1 Project	1x6 = 6 ECTS
Courses in philosophy (seminars, colloquia, compact courses, tutorials, projects, summer schools, group projects)	= 21 ECTS
Courses in political science/economics/law	= 30 ECTS
1 MA thesis	= 30 ECTS

**If you lack a BA Minor in Philosophy:**

You will have to do 4 introductory courses in philosophy additionally, namely:

- Einführungskurs Politische Philosophie
- Einführungskurs Ethik
- Einführungskurs Handlungstheorie
- Einführungskurs Rechtsphilosophie

The total of 24 ECTS points are counted extracurricularly, i.e. the grades won't influence your Master's grade and the ECTS points don't count as a part of the 120 ECTS points you have to earn for getting the PLEP Master's degree. Obviously, you'll have to pass the courses, and they will be displayed in your transcript of records.

**If you lack a BA Minor in Political Science/Law/Economics:**

You will have to do additional courses in one or more of those disciplines on the bachelor's level to the extent of 15 ECTS. These ECTS points are counted extracurricularly, i.e. the grades won't influence your Master's grade and the ECTS points don't count as a part of the 120 ECTS points you have to gain for getting the PLEP Master's degree. Obviously, you'll have to pass the courses, and they will be displayed in your transcript of records.

## 1.4 ECTS points

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**How do I earn ECTS points?**

You gain ECTS points by fulfilling all course requirements. The grade you earn will be multiplied with the ECTS-points. Hence, e.g. a project counts 1.5 times more than a colloquium for the overall grade of your MA diploma. Grades range from 6 (best) to 1 (worst), with grade 4 = passed.

ECTS points equate hours of work. At the University of Bern one ECTS point amounts to 25-30 hours of work. Keep this in mind when planning your studies and try to avoid overdoing it; few people can work successfully more than 40 hours a week – at least not studying philosophy and not if they want to have a social life!

**Where do I find out how many ECTS-points I have already earned?**

All the grades will be displayed in CTS/KLS.



## 2. Studying the PLEP program

### 2.1 Literature

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#### Where do I find course material?

The lecturer will inform students about the required material and where to find it at the beginning of the semester. Here are the ways in which it usually works:

- Most courses in philosophy, political science, law, and economics offer their course material online on ILIAS at: <http://ilias.unibe.ch>. Under "Magazin" you'll find the different faculties. Choose the one which your course belongs to, then choose the corresponding department and finally the course. Under "Beitreten" you can access the course and its material.
- The material for courses in philosophy is in general also available for photocopying. You'll find the readers in the Department of Philosophy, on the bookshelf behind the printers.
- For courses in law, you'll find the link to the website of the department at: [http://www.rechtswissenschaft.unibe.ch/index\\_eng.html](http://www.rechtswissenschaft.unibe.ch/index_eng.html). The course material is often provided there. In addition, it is sometimes required to buy a reader/script, which is available at the student book store in the main building.
- Photocopying is quite easy at the University of Bern, as you can pay everything with your student card (Unicard) once you validated it (find out here where and how: [http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational\\_matters/unicard/validation\\_and\\_validity/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational_matters/unicard/validation_and_validity/index_eng.html)). You can find out here [http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational\\_matters/unicard/use\\_as\\_a\\_means\\_of\\_payment/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/studies/organizational_matters/unicard/use_as_a_means_of_payment/index_eng.html) where to charge your card. In the Department of Philosophy the photocopier is right in front of the library entrance.
- Printing is possible in the Basisbibliothek Unitobler (library). The print job has to be given from the computer pool of the library. You can use your student login to sign into those computers.

#### Where do I find literature?

- *Libraries:* You can use your student card (Unicard) as a library card when borrowing books. Visit: [http://www.unibe.ch/university/services/university\\_library/services/borrowing/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/university/services/university_library/services/borrowing/index_eng.html) for further information. The most important libraries for students of philosophy are:

Department of Philosophy (2nd floor, Unitobler)  
Basisbibliothek Unitobler (Unitobler-basement)  
Bibliothek von Roll (Fabrikstrasse 8)

- *Literature Research:* Go to [http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/studies/plep/study/index\\_eng.html](http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/studies/plep/study/index_eng.html). Under "Study Tips" you find various possibilities to search for literature. Go to "IDS Basel/Bern" to search for books in libraries or to "Fachinformationen" in order to get access to databases or to "Online Journals". Under [https://www.unibe.ch/university/services/university\\_library/research/catalogs/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/university/services/university_library/research/catalogs/index_eng.html) you'll find some more possibilities of online research, e.g. the catalogue of libraries of other Swiss universities. If you want to borrow a book from a library of another Swiss university, you can order it and collect it at one of the libraries in Bern (costs approx. CHF 5.- to 10.-).

- *VPN-client*: Access to online journals and databases is provided by the university and therefore only granted when being connected to the university's network. To access it from home, download the VPN-client which allows you to connect to it. You'll find the download as well as instructions under: [http://www.unibe.ch/university/campus\\_and\\_infrastructure/rund\\_um\\_computer/internetzugang/access\\_to\\_internal\\_resources\\_via\\_vpn/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/university/campus_and_infrastructure/rund_um_computer/internetzugang/access_to_internal_resources_via_vpn/index_eng.html).

*Student Book Store*: There are book stores for students in the Unitobler building, as well as in the university's main building ("Hauptgebäude", downstairs).

## 2.2 What are the dates and methods of testing?

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The methods and dates of testing depend on the course and they are announced in CTS/KSL and/or by the lecturer in the first week of the semester.

- > **Note** Usually, the deadline for the exam registrations is near the middle or the end of the semester. Make sure to check early enough.
- > **Note** If you miss the deadline, it is not possible to complete the course and gain the ECTS-points. Don't hesitate to ask the lecturer or his/her assistant.
- In philosophy, you'll mostly have to write papers. In general, course papers have to be submitted near the end of the semester break ("Vorlesungsfreie Zeit") shortly before the start of the new semester, which means you don't have to write them during the semester. The same is true for seminars in political science, economics, or law.
- If you attend lectures ("Vorlesungen") at these departments, you will have to take a written exam. In political science, exams are mostly conducted during the last week of the semester, whereas in law, exams tend to take place in the first or second month after the semester ends. For law courses, you must register in time for the exam, early in the semester. Check the law department website for deadlines.
  - > **Note** This information is only based on experience and supplied without liability. Methods and dates of testing can vary according to the individual courses. Make sure to check each course you attend!

## 2.3 What about studying abroad?

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For participating in an exchange program we advise you to start planning one year before you're actually going, in order to find an institution, meet all deadlines et cetera.

- > **Note** For an Erasmus exchange the deadline for doing an exchange in the autumn and spring semester is 1st of March.

First you will decide upon the period of time that you plan to go, the university you want to visit and if you want to do it as part of a program. After you have settled these questions and after you have gotten positive feedback from the exchange university as well as possible program coordinators, you can look into the specific courses you plan to take.

As soon as you know exactly which courses you are planning to take, and before you are leaving for the exchange semester, you will have to contact the mobility coordinator of the philosophy institute and sign a 'learning agreement' with her/him. This assures you that the ECTS that you'll gain at the other institution will be credited at the University of Bern.

More information about different possibilities of doing an exchange can be found under: [https://www.unibe.ch/studies/mobility/outgoing/overview/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/studies/mobility/outgoing/overview/index_eng.html)

Information about the Erasmus program can be found under: [https://www.unibe.ch/studies/mobility/outgoing/in\\_europe/sempr\\_erasmus\\_studies/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/studies/mobility/outgoing/in_europe/sempr_erasmus_studies/index_eng.html)

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Matthias Rolffs, who is responsible for mobility in the Department of Philosophy, by email at: [matthias.rolffs@philo.unibe.ch](mailto:matthias.rolffs@philo.unibe.ch) or by telephone at: +41 31 631 82 89. He will also make sure that your ECTS will be added to your student profile after you come back to Bern.

## 2.4 Master's thesis

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### **When do I have to decide about the topic of my master's thesis?**

In the first semester, you certainly don't have to think about your master's thesis yet. In general the professors for political philosophy or practical philosophy are available as advisors for the master's thesis for PLEP students. You can decide on your own, whom of the just mentioned professors you want to ask to be your advisor. Please be aware that a professor can turn down your request due to time constraints or other reasons. The decision of the topic is to be made in consultation with the professor that will be your advisor.

### **Can I choose any topic I am interested in?**

You are welcome to make a suggestion for the topic based on your interests; it has to be a philosophical topic of course. However, the final decision has to be made in consultation with your master's thesis advisor.

### **Is it possible to write the thesis in German?**

Yes, you are allowed to write the thesis (as well as all other papers) in German as long as the advisor of the master's thesis or lecturer of the course is fine with it.

### **Where, how and when do I have to announce my thesis?**

There are two possible dates to hand in your master's thesis, either in June or in December.

- > **Note** The announcement of the thesis has to happen approximately six months prior to handing it in.
- > **Note** You can find the dates and deadlines on the bottom left under:  
[http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor\\_master/master\\_s\\_degree/index\\_eng.html](http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor_master/master_s_degree/index_eng.html)

There, you'll also find the form for the announcement of the thesis ("Registration for MA thesis") which has to be submitted to the Deans' Office.

If you want to postpone the deadline of your thesis, there is another form available under the above mentioned link ("Extending the submission deadline").

When handing in the thesis, remember to submit the form "Declaration of the Master's thesis". This is an assertion that you have written it on your own.

## 3. Finishing the PLEP program

### 3.1 Crucial dates and deadlines

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You can finish the master's program either after the spring semester and get the diploma in October, or after the fall semester and get the diploma in March.

The deadlines for announcement and submission of the master's thesis, as well as for application of the diploma, are announced on the corresponding website under "Registration for the Master's Thesis": [http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor\\_master/master\\_s\\_degree/index\\_eng.html](http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor_master/master_s_degree/index_eng.html).

#### Are there any final exams?

No, there are no final exams in the PLEP program. Your final grade will be calculated cumulatively. The grades of your courses are weighed according to the number of ECTS points awarded for each course. The overall grade is derived by means of the average of the grades of your courses and the grade of your master's thesis, the former being counted twice as much as the latter.

### 3.2 How do I get the diploma?

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When you have received all the grades for your courses and gained the 120 ECTS points (including master's thesis), you can apply for the diploma (check the deadline! - see above, 3.1). Make sure that your record of courses ("Studienblatt") is complete.

The application procedure includes the following:

- Contact the PLEP Study Consultant and ask to check whether you fulfill all the requirements and have completed all the necessary courses of the PLEP (and extracurricular courses!).
- Once the PLEP Study Consultant has confirmed your application status in KSL, you may submit the following "Application for MA diploma" confirming the completion of your studies: [http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studium/bachelor\\_master/masterabschluss/anmeldewebformular/antrag\\_fuer\\_die\\_ausstellung\\_des\\_bachelor\\_\\_\\_\\_masterdiploms/index\\_ger.html](http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studium/bachelor_master/masterabschluss/anmeldewebformular/antrag_fuer_die_ausstellung_des_bachelor____masterdiploms/index_ger.html)
- Please confirm with your MA thesis supervisor that the form has been submitted.
- Pay the diploma fee to the Dean's Office. You'll find the amount and account information under "Degree Fee" > [http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor\\_master/master\\_s\\_degree/index\\_eng.html](http://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/bachelor_master/master_s_degree/index_eng.html)
- Take the "Confirmation of MA completion", a copy of your record of courses, the "Application for MA diploma" and proof of payment to the Dean's Office and apply for your diploma (check the deadline! - see above, 3.1).
- Graduation day will take place about a month after the deadline for the application. For exact dates, see: [http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/studies/plep/info/index\\_eng.html#pane258825](http://www.philosophie.unibe.ch/studies/plep/info/index_eng.html#pane258825)
- Celebrate!

## **Imprint**

Universität Bern  
Institut für Philosophie  
Länggassstrasse 49a  
Postfach  
3000 Bern 9

Inhalt/Gestaltung:  
Markus Stepanians  
Anna Goppel  
Marcel Twele

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